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General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
33rd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 6 November 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(c) WORLD DECADE FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (A/46/3, A/46/160-E/1991/66)

1. Mr. AHMED (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) entitled "Progress of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) during the period 1990-1991" (A/46/160-E/1991/66), said that the period in question had been very productive from the point of view of activities relating to the World Decade for Cultural Development. At the national level, many Governments had taken steps to integrate cultural factors more fully in development plans and programmes. At the international level a growing interest among policy makers in the cultural dimension of development was reflected in the number of projects submitted to UNESCO, the coordinating agency for the Decade. At the subregional and regional levels, conferences and events had been organized, including ministerial meetings held in Cameroon, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela and a meeting of women writers held in Trinidad and Tobago. The Intergovernmental Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development established by UNESCO to stimulate, monitor and coordinate activities related to the Decade had played a significant role in organizing and guiding such activities. An inter-agency steering committee had been established within the United Nations system by the Secretary-General, and the Administrative Committee on Coordination regularly reviewed the progress achieved in promoting the goals and objectives of the Decade.

2. In its resolution 45/189, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO to include proposals on the modalities of a mid-term review in their second biennial report on progress in the implementation of the World Decade. At its second regular session of 1991 the Economic and Social Council had considered the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report and had agreed that the global mid-term review of the Decade should take the form of a special debate on the matter at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 1994, while the work involving the regional commissions should be undertaken in 1993.

3. At its twenty-sixth session, the General Conference of UNESCO had authorized the Director-General, in cooperation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to establish an independent world commission on culture and development to formulate proposals for both urgent and long-term action to meet cultural needs in the context of development. The world commission was expected to prepare, within three years of its establishment, a policy-oriented report covering such issues as the interrelationship between culture and development, the growing interchange between different cultures, the contribution of women and men and the participation of various segments of the population in cultural development, the relationships between culture and Governments, links between environment and culture and the parallels between the safeguarding of man's natural and cultural heritages.

4. The world commission was expected to hold world-wide consultations and draw upon the resources of diverse cultural traditions in all regions. It would act as a catalyst and promote public awareness of culture as a source of creativity, development and human well-being and sustenance for the human spirit, thereby bringing about a better understanding of the interaction between culture and development. All efforts to better the human condition, safeguard freedom and democracy and promote a just and peaceful world must be grounded in the recognition of the cultural roots of those endeavours.

5. Mr. ARFWEDSON (United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural Organization) said that there had been a significant increase in the number of national and regional initiatives undertaken within the framework of the World Decade for Cultural Development. The Decade had also acquired important regional and interregional dimensions. Regional priorities for Asia and the Pacific had been outlined at the meeting of National Committees for the Decade held at Bali, Indonesia, in June 1990, and for Europe at the meeting held at Oslo, Norway, in July 1991. A meeting for the Latin America and Caribbean region had taken place at Havana, Cuba in September 1991, and a regional meeting for the Arab States was to be held in Algeria. A subregional meeting for the countries of southern Africa had been held in Zimbabwe in August 1991.

6. Considerable progress had been made on the first three major Decade projects, the Integral Study of the Silk Roads-Roads of Dialogue, the Revival of the Library of Alexandria and commemoration of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of the Encounter between Two Worlds.

7. Most of the initiatives undertaken by the States members of UNESCO were oriented towards affirming and enriching cultural identities and promoting international cultural cooperation, two Decade objectives. However, few projects related to the other main objectives: broadening participation in culture; and the first main objective, acknowledging the cultural dimension of development, which was the most complicated and thus the most difficult to address properly. Considerable effort was still required to broaden the international community's understanding of that objective and, at its special session in February 1991, the Intergovernmental Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development had reiterated its concern that that objective had not been adequately taken into account in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

8. Nevertheless, there were signs of a growing awareness within the development cooperation community that development involved more than simply promoting economic growth. Indications of that included the social soundness analysis used by the United States Agency for International Development, the beneficiary analysis used by the World Bank for project appraisal and identification, the Canadian International Development Agency's reformulation of the basic premises for policies and programmes to include cultural factors, and the Human Development Report 1990, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

9. The cultural dimension of development differed from the human and social dimension in that it involved an overall perspective rather than focus on

(Mr. Arfwedson, UNESCO)

support for key sectors. It suggested that each society had its own rationality, that the values, perspectives, behaviour and beliefs of beneficiary groups should be taken into account in the design and implementation of all development activities and that those groups should participate in all stages of the development process. Such an approach also required that planners and donor agencies should endeavour to foresee the socio-cultural consequences of development programmes.

10. However, the concept of the cultural dimension of development required further elaboration and practical methods for taking it into account in project design. UNESCO had included an intersectoral project for the development of such a methodology in its regular programme for the next biennium. A meeting of experts on the cultural dimension of development, held in Paris from 16 to 18 September 1991, had brought together representatives of multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, development specialists, academics and government officials to examine the cultural factors affecting development, and the conclusions of that meeting would guide the work of the intersectoral project. At its twenty-sixth session, the General Conference of UNESCO had adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO jointly to establish a world commission on culture and development, one of the main tasks of which should be to study the interrelationship between development strategies and cultural factors.

11. Much of the first half of the Decade had been spent coming to terms with what had been perceived as a complicated agenda. However, progress was being made and the proposed mid-term review offered an opportunity for assessing achievements, focusing efforts, reviewing goals, limiting priorities and setting specific tasks for the second half of the Decade. The prospects for such an undertaking were good, as States took an increasingly regional, rather than national, approach to Decade matters.

12. Finally, a UNESCO prize for the arts had been established within the framework of the Decade by the Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan, with the generous assistance of the Japanese artist Akii Higashiyama. The prize would be awarded in alternate years on the World Day for Cultural Development to five young artists from all over the world. It was hoped that the prize would effectively promote the Decade.

13. Mr. POST (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the end of East-West antagonisms, the birth of new democracies and the strengthening of human rights had opened up the way for more profound consideration of urgent questions such as the cultural values that ought to guide the international community in a time of rapid change. Culture was not merely a tool to be placed at the service of the development process; it was one of the dimensions of development whose integration was necessary in order to achieve the culturally sustainable development which was the focus of the extensively discussed initiative for a world report on culture and development.

(Mr. Post, Netherlands)

14. At its twenty-sixth session, the General Conference of UNESCO had agreed that an independent world commission on culture and development, should prepare such a report, focusing on questions, concerns and new challenges related to the cultural and socio-cultural factors affecting development and to the impact of social and economic development on culture. The report was to be policy-oriented and designed in such a way as to engage the general public while assisting those responsible for formulating and implementing cultural development policies at the national and international levels.

15. A changing world required the development of a set of universally accepted values derived from cultural exchange and enrichment to guide the process of change. One such value was respect for cultural diversity, which must be inherent in a democratic society. Increasing exposure through different media to other cultures had encouraged the desire to learn about the forms of cultural expression of other peoples. While that should lead to greater mutual understanding, there was a danger that traditional customs might disappear, threatening cultural diversity and causing irreparable loss to the world as a whole. Policy makers should feel challenged to respond to that threat. International organizations, albeit with limited means at their disposal, should encourage politicians and planners to take appropriate action.

16. Greater efforts should be made to implement the basic programme of the Decade. The Twelve wished to express their appreciation for the work of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Decade and had taken note of its recommendations with regard to the mid-term review. The review should include an examination of organizational and administrative matters concerning the Decade, an evaluation of project implementation, an assessment of financial needs and available resources and a re-examination and possible modification of the Decade's initial objectives. The Decade's objective of acknowledging the cultural dimension of development should be adequately taken into account in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

17. Other important issues that needed to be addressed in the review were: the protection of cultural and natural heritages against the effects of demographic and economic growth; the development of traditional forms of human and cultural capital, particularly traditional knowledge, skills and crafts; the enhancement of popular participation in development planning, policy formulation and programme implementation; and the improvement of access to information on social and cultural aspects of the development process. The review must also address the issue of safeguarding minority cultures and fostering understanding between peoples of their respective cultural values. The European Community and its member States remained committed to the World Decade and to ensuring its lasting success.

18. Mr. HUSLID (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the ongoing process of change, modernization and globalization which constituted development had a profound affect on the world's cultures and was, to an extent, conditioned by them. Notwithstanding that interdependence, the

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

cultural dimension was often overlooked in the design of development strategies, such as the International Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. The importance of biological diversity in nature was paralleled by the potential which cultural diversity held for development, particularly sustainable development.

19. While cultural differences all too often fuelled local conflicts, it was also true that multicultural societies had great potential for enriching their communities and States. For those reasons the Nordic countries had joined other sponsors of UNESCO and General Assembly resolutions calling for the establishment of an independent world commission on culture and development to heighten awareness of the interrelated nature of development and culture and of the potential of the cultural sector as an area for development and international cooperation.

20. Interest in foreign cultures fostered international understanding and mutual respect. Countries considered poor in economic terms frequently possessed a rich cultural heritage. Culture was also an area of development where income could be generated through the marketing of cultural products and tourism. An independent world commission could explore such valuable linkages between culture and development. The resolution just adopted by the UNESCO General Conference suggested areas that might be addressed, but the world commission would be responsible for determining its own mandate and work schedule. Norway had pledged $500,000 to support the commission's work and secretariat, and Sweden had promised a substantial contribution.

21. Mr. POLUREZ (Ukraine) said that the question of cultural development was of particular significance for Ukraine in the light of its recent declaration of independence, which marked a turning point in the development of its own national culture.

22. Ukraine's experience with the World Decade for Cultural Development had demonstrated the increasingly significant role played by culture in promoting the human factor in society and in encouraging economic, technological and social progress. In 1988, Ukraine had established a National Committee for the World Decade and had launched a number of major cultural projects, each of which was designed to have a multiplier effect. In 1990, a European seminar on the preservation and development of folklore had been held at Kiev with more than 2,000 participants from around the world. As well as initiating such cultural exercises of its own, Ukraine was participating in a number of major UNESCO projects.

23. Ukraine had acceded to two important UNESCO instruments, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Ukraine had proposed a number of its own cultural monuments for inclusion in the UNESCO list of cultural treasures. In 1988, Ukraine had marked the millennium of

(Mr. Polurez, Ukraine)

Christianity in Kievan Russia as an event of world historical and cultural significance. In addition, the National Committee for the Decade had extensive plans for major cultural endeavours which it hoped would contribute to the development and enrichment of the world's cultural heritage.

24. Ukraine believed that the attainment of the Decade's goals would be considerably advanced if States kept one another informed about their measures to implement Decade objectives at the national level. It was important to keep reassessing the Decade programme in the light of the experience accumulated, and emphasis should be placed on the broader participation of youth organizations in its activities.

25. Ms. STOKES (New Zealand) said that the number and variety of large-scale cultural projects currently under way in the world reflected the broad international interest that the World Decade for Cultural Development had captured. A major project, entitled "Ocean Roads", which had the Pacific Ocean as an integrating theme, had been launched in her country's region, and she believed that such far-reaching projects of regional or interregional scope would be of great benefit to international cultural cooperation.

26. Of the World Decade's four objectives, particular attention should be given to the first: acknowledging the cultural dimension of development. In his report (A/46/160), the Secretary-General had stressed the need for increased awareness of the cultural dimension of development projects. The social dimension was not the only consideration: development partners should be made sensitive to a society's cultural setting as well. The recent massive changes in the world had led to a global agenda for the 1990s which should be taken into account in the implementation of the Decade's first objective. Further study of the cultural factor was required, and her delegation was therefore pleased to note that UNESCO planned to undertake a project on practical methods for building that factor into development projects.

27. At the recent UNESCO General Conference in Paris, New Zealand had been a sponsor of the resolution on the establishment of an independent world commission on culture and development to study the interrelationship between development practices and cultural factors. New Zealand aimed to participate in the work of the commission by contributing studies on its own experience.

(d) ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued) (A/C.2/46/L.32)

Draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (A/C.2/46/L.32)

28. Mr. OUTLULE (Botswana), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that Lesotho had been erroneously omitted from the list of sponsors in document A/C.2/46/L.32 and announced that Mauritania had also become a sponsor. He also welcomed the fact that Namibia, which was

(Mr. Outlule, Botswana)

sponsoring a draft resolution on the Southern African Development Coordination Conference for the first time, had become a member of the Conference.

29. Drawing attention to the draft text, he said that the word "further" should be deleted from the seventh preambular paragraph and inserted at the beginning of the tenth preambular paragraph.

(i) ENTREPRENEURSHIP (continued)

Draft resolution on entrepreneurship (A/C.2/46/L.25)

30. Mr. HURLEY (United States of America) said that Albania, Argentina, Australia, Israel, Japan, Ukraine and Yugoslavia had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
34th meeting
held on
Thursday, 7 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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21 November 1991
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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

NATURAL DISASTER IN THE PHILIPPINES

1. On behalf of the Committee, the CHAIRMAN expressed sympathy to the Government of the Philippines in connection with the most recent disaster to strike that country. Torrential rains had caused great loss of life and considerable damage. He assured the Government and people of the Philippines that, as they underwent their latest ordeal, they could count on the full support of the United Nations, which would spare no effort to alleviate the suffering of the population.

AGENDA ITEM 82: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (A/46/3, 344, 501/Rev.1 and 520; A/C.2/46/7)

(a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (A/46/186 and Add.1, A/46/206-E/1991/93 and Add.1-4)

(b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (E/1991/34 and Add.1; A/46/491)

(c) UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (E/1991/34 and Add.1)

(d) UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES (E/1991/34 and Add.1)

(e) UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME (E/1991/34 and Add.1)

(f) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (A/46/265-E/1991/105)

AGENDA ITEM 88: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (A/46/336, 344, 461, 501/Rev.1, A/46/520 and 579)

Introductory statements

2. Mr. BLANCA (Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation), introducing his report on the operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/46/206 and Add.1-4), said that the major challenges of the day - eliminating absolute poverty, relieving despair and reducing mortality, particularly among children and mothers - called for solidarity from the international community. Faced with a worsening situation, the United Nations system must play a major role in reversing that trend, utilizing its best research and analytical method, and full technical resources to address those challenges.

3. International cooperation must contribute to social and political progress in the developing countries, and the operational activities of the United Nations provided an excellent way for the international community to participate in that global effort. That was why the United Nations system, seeking to translate the intentions of Member States into concrete action, was

(Mr. Blanca)

undertaking fundamental reforms of its operational activities. The steps taken by various entities in that regard were in line with General Assembly resolution 44/211.

4. The operational activities of the United Nations system were confronted by a growing number of challenges, one of the most important of which concerned refugees, displaced persons and returnees. Whether such flows of people were caused by conflicts and civil strife or by economic hardship, it was essential to mitigate their economic and social consequences and plan an effective and coordinated response with the countries concerned. To deal with that problem, there was only one solution: to promote growth and development in the countries of the East and the South.

5. Other major problems were alarming population growth (more than 250,000 each day) and acute hunger and malnutrition (180 million African children, for example, suffered from serious malnutrition). The operational activities of the United Nations system were increasingly designed to address those vital concerns in a coordinated and effective manner. They focused on human development, inspired by the international strategies adopted in 1990. United Nations organizations were working closely with many countries in those fields, where resident coordinators played an increasingly important role. It was clearer than ever before that human development called for the harnessing of the full range of human and financial resources of Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in a broad-based, multidisciplinary effort. Accordingly, the United Nations system was promoting an approach involving all segments of countries in a participatory development process.

6. In keeping with the spirit of General Assembly resolution 44/211, current reforms were designed essentially to achieve a greater focus on recipient countries and involve them more closely in programming and implementation and in choosing how best to utilize the capacities of the United Nations in meeting their needs. Increased decentralization and adaptation to local requirements could only enhance the relevance and impact of operational activities.

7. In response to those changes, United Nations organizations were increasingly focusing their technical competence on upstream services through integrated and multidisciplinary programming, leaving implementation more to Governments and national institutions. Decentralization was being accompanied by delegation of authority and, in an effort to adapt to that new trend, various organizations had engaged in a systematic review of their functions and structures, including the composition of their field establishments. It was from that perspective that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) were implementing decisions on support costs. A new spirit of cooperation existed, and a sense of tripartite partnership was emerging. Programme guidelines and training activities were being elaborated jointly to give effect to those decisions; that initiative should bring improvements in programme delivery and contribute further to the creation of national capacities.

(Mr. Blanca)

8. The report on operational activities for development referred to constraints in the extension of national execution. Nevertheless, the replies received from resident coordinators suggested that that method, which had become the norm for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), would be expanded, and it was expected that at least 50 per cent of UNDP-supported projects in about half of the countries would be executed by national bodies.

9. In addition, significant steps had been taken to enhance programming collaboration. Progress in joint programming was being monitored through a newly established system of country profiles and more extensive communication with resident coordinators.

10. As the issue of coordination, i.e. the role of the resident coordinators, was particularly important, the report contained a specific proposal to provide the resident coordinators with the consultancy funds and support staff that were deemed essential in order to cope with the additional workload involved in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system.

11. The demand for assistance through the United Nations system continued to be far in excess of the available resources. Moreover, resources were not keeping pace with needs. Between 1989 and 1990, the volume of official development assistance (ODA) had increased from $US 53.1 billion to $US 62.1 billion (about 17 per cent) while the percentage of the United Nations share in ODA had risen from $US 7.5 billion to $US 8.5 billion. While the nominal increase in resources represented evidence of continued confidence by donors and recipients in the United Nations operational activities, it should nevertheless be noted that the rate of increase in real terms remained clearly inadequate and had even been slowing down.

12. Much still remained to be done to adapt the United Nations system to the changing circumstances of the 1990s. Above all, a more responsive and integrated field structure was essential, as was an improvement in the coherence and relevance of the substantive support and communication between field offices and Headquarters. The scope of the field offices had evolved over the past decade. It would be necessary to study the impact of the reforms on a country-by-country basis and, in the context of the 1992 triennial comprehensive review, to appraise the effectiveness of the present functions and structures. Means must be found of ensuring full interaction between the operational requirements at the field level and the analytic and research network available to the United Nations system. Such interaction was particularly important in view of the current trend to decentralize activities.

13. The report under consideration was a factual analysis of the measures taken by the United Nations system in the second year of a three-year programme of implementation of resolution 44/211. It did not contain

recommendations for action, as those were to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, in the context of the triennial policy review. The review was a task of considerable scope and it was essential that the General Assembly should give clear directives at the current session. It was clear that the review should be carried out in a well-defined policy context by bringing out the essential linkages between the substantive policy issues set forth in the mandates of the United Nations system and the specific national objectives which operational activities helped to achieve. A central concern of the review must be an assessment of the role of the United Nations system in the building up of national capacity. The review should also look at decentralization to the field level; that would involve a review of such questions as delegation of authority coupled with the technical and financial means to respond adequately and flexibly to the needs and expectations of each developing country. It would also involve looking into the effectiveness of linking national resources with programmes and projects supported by the United Nations. Attention should also be given to steps taken to remove constraints to fuller government involvement in the operational activities of the system.

14. Since decentralization was the underlying philosophy of the reforms initiated by resolution 44/211, the degree to which that goal had been accomplished should be a principal concern of the comprehensive review of 1992. The functioning of the resident coordinator system should be examined within the context of the review; resident coordinators were called upon to play an increasingly active role at the country level.

15. Regarding the resolution on operational activities to be adopted by the General Assembly during the current session, he emphasized the importance of achieving consensus on a number of key points which called for new measures. The terms of resolution 44/211 were fairly broad, and it was therefore essential that Member States should identify the course to be followed with regard to future operational activities.

16. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme), speaking of the enormous progress made in democracy, freedom and human rights, said that such progress did not automatically translate into a better quality of life. Undoubtedly, freedom and justice were the foundations of economic growth; but they must be underpinned by good governance, effective policies, appropriate technologies and wide-ranging skills.

17. As the cold war receded and democracy was being reborn, mankind was facing problems which threatened his very survival. On the one hand, there was expansion of the deprived populations in the South and, on the other, relentless consumption in the North; those twin phenomena, were placing an intolerable strain on the planet's natural resources, even the most essential, such as air, land and water. Moreover, armed conflicts and deteriorating social and economic conditions only increased migration and the displacement of populations. Crime and drug abuse - often closely related - now posed a

(Mr. Draper, UNDP)

problem in all types of society, whatever their stage of development. Equally tragic was the AIDS epidemic, which was now reaching catastrophic proportions in some countries. In addition, external debt and trade barriers were inhibiting the efforts of the developing countries to promote economic growth and human development. Finally, there was the challenge of truly integrating women into the development process.

18. It was now well-known that economic growth was the sole means of alleviating the dire poverty in which one fifth of humanity lived. Bridging the gap between rich and poor, without affecting the durability of the planet's resources, would undoubtedly prove as difficult a challenge as putting an end to confrontation between the super-Powers. Clearly no progress could be made without the active help of the United Nations system. It was also clear that the Organization must be restructured, particularly those parts that dealt with economic and social affairs. UNDP had been doing just that for several years, and it could be said to have accomplished considerable progress on all fronts.

19. When speaking of the United Nations system, especially in the context of operational activities for development, it should be remembered that the system was a grouping of often autonomous organizations with their own governing bodies. In some instances, the division of labour between such organizations seemed neither rational nor clear. Coordinating their activities was, therefore, neither simple nor easy. UNDP was aware of that fact and it supported any initiative designed to improve the ability of the system to discharge the tasks assigned or that might be assigned to it. Nevertheless, reforms would bear fruit only if they were comprehensive and bold. The study carried out by the Nordic countries was a great step forward in that direction.

20. To retain its central position, UNDP had revised its mandate in light of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211. It had reaffirmed that its assistance must correspond to the priorities and goals set by Governments and must be intended primarily to strengthen national capacities for human development. In 1991, as in 1990, the Governing Council had emphasized that the development process must be determined and managed at the national level if it was to be sustainable. External cooperation could contribute to that process, but it must not take over.

21. A number of initiatives had emerged from that consensus. First, emphasis had been placed on national management of development programmes, including their external components. That was the meaning of the phrase "national execution". At the same time, new modalities had been established for the reimbursement of agency support costs, which would give Governments greater choice in implementing programmes. Agreements had already been concluded to that end. Finally, it was planned to adopt an integrated programming approach, which would be more broadly supportive of the priorities established in national programmes and less narrowly focused on often unrelated UNDP-funded projects. That would permit better results and strengthened coordination.

(Mr. Draper, UNDP)

22. One of the most significant elements of the reform process was UNDP's increased commitment to the promotion of human development. That initiative had been welcomed both by donor and by developing countries and had placed UNDP at the centre of the development debate. The third Human Development Report was in preparation, and efforts were being made to give that concept specific content at the national level with the aim of obtaining tangible results. That necessitated a more active dialogue with the Governments of developing countries, not to impose conditions but to define the available options so that countries could make informed decisions. Through its political neutrality, its multisectoral approach and its permanent presence in 113 countries, UNDP had been able to forge bonds of confidence which made such dialogue possible. That was its comparative advantage.

23. The role played by UNDP resident representatives as resident coordinators of all United Nations development activities was of key importance for the smooth operation of the system as a whole. That required development partners to support the efforts of UNDP in that area. Significant progress had been achieved at country level through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, which UNDP was currently chairing.

24. UNDP had also taken a close look at its structure and had decided on a certain number of changes, pertaining primarily to the decentralization of decision-making, which would be shifted as far as possible to the country level. At the same time, UNDP was working on ways to pressure central policy-making and accountability.

25. At the operational level, UNDP was making efforts to meet the growing challenges it faced in the developing countries, and particularly in the least developed countries, to which it directed 55 per cent of its resources. It was chalking up a record of accomplishments and was increasing its impact by working both at grass-roots and at national planning policy levels. It realized that the developing countries had a deep well of experience and would continue to promote technical cooperation among those countries.

26. The integration of women in all UNDP activities was a key objective and the benefits were becoming apparent, thanks to steps taken in the areas of education, credit access, extension services and management training. At the same time, UNDP was helping the authorities in several countries to bring women more fully into national development planning.

27. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were participating increasingly in UNDP programmes. Since 1988, NGOs and local groups in 65 countries had been awarded grants in excess of $4 million, through the Partners in Development Programme, which promoted cooperation between NGOs and Governments.

28. UNDP was also working to stimulate the private sector. Over the previous five years, resident representatives had organized several hundred meetings around the world, enabling senior government officials to meet local

(Mr. Draper, UNDP)

entrepreneurs - both men and women - and to learn their needs. Credit access programmes had been implemented, prominent among which was the Grameen Bank programme. In Latin America, UNDP was helping to develop similar programmes in a number of countries. It was also promoting small and medium-sized businesses in all regions - from Madagascar to Mongolia, from Bolivia to Yemen - and, most particularly, in Africa, through the African Project Development Facility.

29. UNDP's most important contribution was in the area of the environment. There too its strategy was aimed at reaching all development agents: farmers, NGOs, universities and policy makers in the South and donors and research institutes in the North. The primary objective was the training both of men and of women. Only such an approach would ensure environmentally sound development after UNDP had ended its work. One of the most important initiatives in recent years was the participation of UNDP, together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, in the Global Environment Facility, set up to fight depletion of the ozone layer, loss of biological diversity, global warming and pollution of international waters. Finally, UNDP was actively involved in preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and was helping Governments and NGOs to draw up appropriate regional and national strategies.

30. UNDP was also assisting the countries of Eastern Europe to carry out their economic reforms. The Baltic States had recently requested recipient status and had asked the Secretary-General to set up a special fund to finance technical cooperation, which would be managed by UNDP. The Soviet Union and its republics had similarly asked for their status to be reviewed, so that they too could benefit from UNDP's expertise.

31. The resident coordinators had been drawn increasingly into emergencies, caused by natural or man-made disasters, in Thailand with its Cambodian refugee problem, in the Horn of Africa, in the Philippines, in Iraq, in the Gulf countries and elsewhere.

32. It was sad that, at a time when needs were growing and ever greater demands were being placed on UNDP, its core resources were not growing as quickly as it had anticipated. As he had recalled at the Pledging Conference, the international community had given a commitment to achieve an 8 per cent annual growth rate in contributions to UNDP. While pledges for 1992 exceeded $1 billion, that represented only a 3.5 per cent increase in resources over the previous year, which was not sufficient to meet planned needs.

33. In conclusion, he said that UNDP was a lively organization and he reaffirmed his determination to implement structural reforms which would enable the Programme to meet the current and future challenges of human development around the world. He reiterated his hope that it would have the necessary financial resources to fulfil its mission.

34. Mr. JI Chaozhu (Under-Secretary-General for Technical Cooperation for Development) said that with the ending of the cold war, the United Nations was at last in a position to play the full role envisaged for it in the Charter and, in particular, to promote "higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development". The achievement of those ends called for a shared commitment on the part of the international community to expanding and deepening international cooperation.

35. The gap between North and South was continually growing. As the representative of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 had said, the world was witnessing a crisis of development which might lead to a new situation of political instability, war and chaos. The United Nations, being impartial and capable of providing politically neutral and commercially disinterested assistance, could and should play a key role in ending that crisis. Strengthening the technical capabilities of the United Nations system in order to provide developing countries with the support they needed to steer their own course was therefore of tremendous importance.

36. Technical cooperation activities had always been a vital aspect of the work of the Secretariat. The term referred, in the larger sense, to work of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, HABITAT, UNCTAD, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, the United Nations Office in Vienna, the five regional commissions and other units under the authority of the Secretary-General. Technical cooperation financing was administered by UNDP and UNFPA. In terms of expenditures, the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development undertook almost three quarters of the work and was thus the largest of the technical cooperation bodies under the authority of the Secretary-General.

37. The Department had been created in 1978, drawing together several pre-existing units, and served as the main operational arm of the United Nations Secretariat for technical cooperation. It was responsible for substantive and managerial support to technical cooperation and operational research activities; it provided technical advisory services to developing countries upon request and at no cost, organized workshops, seminars and fellowship programmes in various sectors, and gave substantive support to various intergovernmental United Nations bodies. The Department obtained about half of its core support from the regular budget of the United Nations and the remainder through overhead earnings from projects executed on behalf of UNDP, UNFPA and other donors. The Department's major contribution to the self-reliance and well-being of developing countries had entailed a long-term investment of technical financial resources which the United Nations had been in a unique position to make.

38. In 1990, the Department had implemented $181 million in projects representing a continuing pattern of increased programme delivery in response to country needs and requests. It now had over 1,500 experts and consultants working in country projects and purchased roughly a third of the necessary equipment from suppliers in developing countries. Its fellowship programme, involving over 4,000 fellows a year, was one of the most developed in the United Nations system.

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

39. Geographically, Africa received the largest share of expenditures, with 45 per cent in 1990. Among the Department's many concerns, poverty eradication was of fundamental importance; during the previous year, expenditures in the least developed countries had come to about $76 million, or over 40 per cent of total project expenditures.

40. Projects in the fields of natural resources and energy accounted for 40 per cent of the Department's total delivery. Management development was an important theme in its efforts in public administration, public finance, and development planning, and it had helped to establish more than 30 national schools and regional and interregional institutes in that field. Environmental issues were a growing area of importance.

41. While a good deal of institution-building remained to be done in the field of population, the training the Department had helped to organize had built up capacities so that many developing countries were now able to provide much of their own university-level training. The Department's technical input had become more and more specialized and included new methodologies and software.

42. In statistics, the Department had contributed towards the development of national capacities to gather, process, analyse and use census data throughout the world. Timely and reliable statistics were, of course, the necessary underpinnings for well-designed national development plans and programmes.

43. The Department had helped countries to assess their mineral resources and build up their capacities to manage them. In several cases, it had served as "honest broker" in negotiations between Governments of developing countries and private investors, thus promoting the investment process.

44. In recent years, many countries had come to the Department for independent advice on structural adjustment programmes and the complex processes facing transitional economies. The Department was well aware of the need for close linkage between technical cooperation and research activities, and cooperated with other main substantive departments of the Secretariat, in particular the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, in the area of entrepreneurial development. Cooperation with the regional commissions had also been increasing steadily through their greater involvement in training programmes and closer association in various United Nations Secretariat undertakings.

45. In response to General Assembly resolution 44/211 and various decisions of the UNDP Governing Council, the Department was taking a number of initiatives to help strengthen national capabilities for project execution, more particularly with regard to recruitment, contracts and procurement, training and project finances. In a related effort, the Department had organized meetings with participants from donor and recipient countries on the harmonization of aid accountability requirements and had helped to establish a working group on the subject.

(Mr. Ji Chaozhu)

46. The Department's multisectoral capacities clearly set it apart from all other entities in the United Nations development system and were a resource of vital importance in dealing with major new challenges.

47. Several recent resolutions, decisions and studies had focused attention upon the tripartite relationship between Governments, UNDP or UNFPA, and United Nations agencies. It was necessary to ensure that through such complementarity of efforts, all parts performed at their best and collaborated efficiently. The growth of national execution changed but did not diminish the importance of United Nations support. The existing complementary capabilities had to be used in the most productive manner. That was particularly important in view of the major changes taking place in response to General Assembly resolution 44/211. The role of the United Nations resident coordinator or the UNDP Resident Representative was pivotal in ensuring that the capacities of all organizations within the system were fully utilized and in avoiding duplication of capacity. That was a matter of concern particularly to his Department, which had no independent field representation and relied upon the resident coordinator to take the initiative of including it in programming exercises and other activities to which it could contribute.

48. As regarded the relationship with the two main financing bodies, UNDP and UNFPA, there were still points of difference to be settled, not only on the issue of support costs but also because of their increasing assumption of project execution functions, which had brought about duplication and erosion of the established partnership. The Department was therefore glad that the recent UNDP Governing Council decision 91/38 had called for a study of the relationship between UNDP and United Nations/DTCD with a view to exploring all possible options for closer cooperation.

49. At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly had asked the Secretary-General to review the structure of the Secretariat in order to streamline operations in the economic, social and related fields. Reform could certainly be greatly beneficial. However, restructuring was not an end in itself. Its purpose should be to strengthen the role of the United Nations, the Secretary-General and the Director-General in helping the developing world overcome poverty, narrow the gap between North and South and truly fulfil the United Nations mandate as envisioned by its founders. Where the result would be otherwise, such so-called streamlining should be firmly eschewed.

50. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) said that while the prospects for the world economy did not look promising and there were questions as to whether international commitment to development would be sustained and strengthened, there were some reasons for optimism in both the political sphere and the sphere of development; indeed, much success had been achieved for child survival and development. The universal child immunization effort was now saving the lives of more than 3 million children a

(Mr. Grant, UNICEF)

year and should soon be saving more than 4 million a year as it moved towards the global eradication of polio. That was the largest peacetime collaborative effort in history and had seen the effective collaboration of WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, many bilateral aid programmes and scores of non-governmental organizations. It was necessary now to move decisively to apply the lessons of both the negative and positive experiences. At the international level, one of the largest and most readily accessible tools available was the operational activities of the United Nations system. The focus of those efforts must be moved from project goals to serving as a catalyst in support of mobilization, and in order to achieve that a clear set of achievable common objectives was needed.

51. A number of consensus strategies had emerged to help meet the challenges. The International Development Strategy for the Fourth Development Decade had been adopted and the effort to adapt it to country-level efforts offered an opportunity to mobilize international support for national development objectives. The Programme of Action of the Second United Nations Least Developed Countries Conference, and the work being done by the World Bank and UNDP to follow up on their 1990 reports represented valuable elements of an emerging international consensus to restore priority to long-term economic and human development objectives. That effort must now be moved forward to the country level. Teams from the United Nations system, under the leadership of the resident coordinator, should be actively seeking to help support Government efforts to develop and achieve national strategies for the 1990s. Those efforts should be a priority objective of the United Nations system, under the leadership of the Director-General, and drawing heavily on the resident coordinator system.

52. It would be easy to focus on some of the more spectacular elements of the World Summit for Children, which, with 71 heads of State or Government, had been the largest summit meeting in history, but he wished rather to call attention to the ambitious yet achievable Declaration and detailed Plan of Action adopted at the Summit, which had now been signed by 126 heads of State or Government. The World Summit for Children had adopted seven major goals to be achieved by the year 2000 as well as a longer list of more specific targets. Along with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Plan of Action represented a comprehensive programme for deep-seated change. From within the United Nations system, 18 organizations had made specific contributions, most developed after an intensive process of discussion at the regional level. In short, the Summit had been a "bottom-up process" that drew content and strength from a multitude of sources and experience.

53. That process itself was critical for the implementation of the commitments made. The broad-based nature of the preparatory process would make it possible to mobilize community groups, local level governments, national Governments, non-governmental organizations, regional organizations, and the entire United Nations system. Thus, the vast majority of Member States were now drawing up national programmes of action to achieve the goals

(Mr. Grant, UNICEF)

established for the 1990s by the Summit. Regional and subregional efforts were also under way, as several regional summit meetings (OAU, the Ibero-American Countries, the Commonwealth) had expressed their desire to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Children.

54. The activities of the United Nations system needed greater coherence. Specific examples had been given of how the system could give real meaning to the principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 44/211, but it was necessary now to move forward to a number of internal questions if the necessary tools were to be available. One such issue was the necessary review of the United Nations system by Governments, a topic currently under active discussion, as illustrated by the efforts under way to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council. Its role in operational activities should be strengthened. Under the Charter, the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee had key roles to play. The latter should ensure that the Council and the General Assembly were able to provide the kind of leadership and guidance for operational activities that the current international situation called for. General Assembly resolution 44/211 placed emphasis on the "programme approach", an issue intimately linked with the need to define common goals. To UNICEF, a programme approach meant the provision of support not through a succession of separate externally supported projects but through the support of long-term country programmes focused on a defined range of national goals. That approach shifted the focus to results. It also required a flexible blend of technical assistance, capital equipment, supplies and recurrent costs support. The move from a project to a programme basis would be a critical element of the improved flexibility and effectiveness that would be necessary to meet the goals of the 1990s.

55. Another vital issue was the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. After the major overhaul undertaken during the past year by CCSQ/OPS, it was necessary to ensure that the provisions for more effective substantive interaction among United Nations agencies at the country level were implemented. For example, country level multidisciplinary teams focused on specific themes, under the overall leadership of the resident coordinator and chaired by the Organization or individual best suited to the task, should be formed quickly. UNICEF had actively supported everything that had been done to harmonize programme cycles around recipient Government planning cycles and to establish common premises for the various United Nations bodies in each country. Concluding, he reaffirmed UNICEF's commitment to cooperating fully in the implementation of the Committee's decisions.

56. Mr. OHLIN (Assistant Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on developing human resources for development (A/46/461), which, despite its grandiose title, was not a handbook for the development of human resources. Its objective, which was more limited, was that established by the General Assembly itself in its resolution 45/191. Thus, the report specified how the coordination activities of the United Nations system relating to human

(Mr. Ohlin)

resources development could be strengthened and made proposals for the promotion and intensification of cooperation to that end. The report contained brief accounts of operational activities in human resources development undertaken by members of the United Nations system, as reported to the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. However, those accounts might not do justice to the enormous variety and high quality of work undertaken by those institutions. Nevertheless, the accounts showed both that substantial cooperation was already part of their operations and that there also was a need for more coordination at several levels. In each country, the main coordinator of operational activities was the Government itself, through its high-level officials. It was Governments who decided on the allocation of their resources. To some degree their efforts were supplemented by members of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. The coordination process also was facilitated by the work of the United Nations resident coordinator, who integrated the responses of the United Nations system with government requests. Such coordination was important in all sectors, but particularly so in human resources development, where the processes were so closely linked that efforts undertaken in one programme could be wasted in the absence of another programme. Thus, a child who was sick could not attend school. A child who was deprived of primary education could never attend university. Projects for family planning and fertility reduction would be more effective if mothers were educated. Literacy was a powerful lever to help women participate in development, encourage initiative and entrepreneurship and stimulate political reform. Consequently, the effectiveness with which resources were put to use depended heavily on the coordination and harmonization of efforts. In some instances the allocation of resources by members of the United Nations system was coordinated in consultative groups organized by the World Bank or round tables organized by UNDP. Coordination of activities in support of human resources development was the task of the Administrative Committee for Coordination and its various task forces and subcommittees. At times, coordination efforts ran into genuine difficulties in the field. The programmes of each specialized agency were determined by its own governing body. There were many General Assembly resolutions, such as the International Development Strategy, which referred to human resources development, but the decisions in each specialized agency were often taken independently. Ways and means of coordinating those activities through the centralization of management were few and weak. However, there was much scope for cooperation, and it should be encouraged.

General debate

57. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, recalled that one of the purposes and principles of the Charter was "to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character" and said that that was the goal of operational activities. In the past few years a new conceptualization of the role of the United Nations had emerged which conceived of an enhanced world body capable of assuming a central role in finding solutions to the

(Mr. Naadjie, Ghana)

myriad problems facing mankind. Those included, of course, the development of the developing countries. Operational activities had come a long way from their very modest beginnings, although not without some difficulties, owing to factors of a structural nature that had impinged on delivery mechanisms. Added to that was a chronic lack of resources that had at times led the United Nations to cut back on operational activities in areas which nevertheless were vital to developing countries. At its special session in 1990, the General Assembly had called for the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries, which was a recognition that the United Nations system had a major role to play in international cooperation to bring about that revitalization. The General Assembly also had adopted the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, which emphasized poverty alleviation, human development and integrated development. That implied tacit acceptance of the fact that a coherent and comprehensive approach to operational activities for development was required. It was imperative to ensure effective coordination among the various agencies; however, although some progress had been made, there still were issues to be resolved before operational activities truly could be one of the main instruments by which the United Nations met the development needs of the developing countries. One such issue was the lack of resources. There was no doubt concerning the urgent need to provide substantial concessional resources to those countries so that they could revive and sustain their economies. The General Assembly recognized that in its resolution 44/211. It was also urgent for the developed countries to meet the agreed official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as well as the targets established by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The effective management of operational activities also was of paramount importance to the developing countries. The field networks of the United Nations system had grown during the past decade. That had led to an expansion of activities which must be closely linked together to ensure coherence and effective delivery.

58. It was significant to observe that certain provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211 had not yet been implemented. The Group of 77 would like to see the full implementation of that resolution. It also would welcome the simplification and harmonization of procedures governing programming and the project cycles of the United Nations system. That would make it possible to meet the needs of the developing countries more effectively by allowing them greater flexibility in adapting the rules to their needs; that would also lead to decentralization and greater adaptation to the needs of the developing countries without losing sight of essential standards of accountability.

59. The triennial review of operational activities would be undertaken in 1992. The Group of 77 endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendations in that connection. Its desire was to strengthen operational activities for development and ensure that they were not marginalized, as that would be very much to the detriment of developing countries. General Assembly resolution 44/211 should be fully implemented so that the United Nations could play the role envisaged by its founders.

60. Mr. RADE (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Economic Community, noted the vast scope of agenda item 88, and pointed out that human resources development was not the same as human development although both concepts basically addressed the same set of issues. It would be useful to clarify them. The belief that human resources were an essential precondition for development had been widely accepted as far back as the 1960s, but the notion of human development had only recently begun to receive attention. Human development concerned more than the formation of human capabilities: it also concerned the role of the individual and his or her full development and participation in social, cultural and political life. Every human resources development policy, therefore, must be part of a broader human development approach. It must be coupled with a democratic and accountable political system, popular participation and respect for human rights. Human resources development had been recognized as a cornerstone of the development strategies of the 1990s. The Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade all treated human resources development as a central feature of any sustainable development. The same was true of the report of the South Commission. Such development was both a source of immediate gain in human well-being and a crucial means of expanding the productive capacities of a country's economy.

61. The first concepts that came to mind in that context were education and health. In the case of the former, it was widely accepted that autonomous development must be based on the education of the population, in particular through primary education, vocational and on-the-job training of the labour force, and indigenous educational institutions. Education fulfilled two important social functions, one socio-economic and the other socio-cultural. From the socio-economic point of view, a high quality educational system open to all not only promoted economic growth but also helped to improve the position of disadvantaged groups by creating equality of opportunity. The socio-cultural function of a good educational system lay in the fact that it enabled people to respond to changing external conditions from within their own culture. In other words, education was not only a consumer good but also, and above all, a productive investment in human capital.

62. For developing countries, universal primary education meant a combination of formal and informal teaching, intended to give people, children and adults alike, the essential knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which they needed in order to create a decent human existence. However, although enrolment in primary education and literacy levels had increased spectacularly in most countries, the overall number of persons unable to read or write, 98 per cent of whom lived in developing countries, had increased almost everywhere. The contribution of education to economic growth had not achieved its full potential, due in part to delays in achieving the quantitative growth in education envisaged and in part to the sometimes poor quality of the education provided. Many children dropped out of school. The quality of teachers, facilities and curricula was uneven and did not correspond adequately to a

(Mr. Rade, Netherlands)

country's real needs and learning materials were insufficient. In many countries government spending on education had declined in terms of percentage and sometimes even in absolute terms. The problem had been exacerbated by population growth and the rise in demand for education. The World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in March 1990, had set the objective of primary education for all by the year 2000. That goal could be attained through a restructuring of educational systems and a reallocation of government resources. Less formal types of education, generally less costly, deserved more attention. Recipient countries in general must give higher priority to education which was still too often regarded as a form of consumption and a first target for budget cuts. That shortsighted policy must be rejected because it jeopardized the productive capacity of society. In many of the poorest countries, higher education had grown faster than primary or secondary education, absorbing a disproportionate share of the national budget. While parents often had to pay for secondary education, higher education was heavily subsidized by Governments. When the participation rate of the underprivileged was low, that was tantamount to transferring resources from the poor to the rich.

63. Without a sound health policy, human resources development would remain an illusion: there would be no sustainable development without a healthy population. The objectives of the strategy of Health for All by the Year 2000, which originated at the Alma Ata Conference in 1978, provided a useful tool in that respect but the high expectations raised by its adoption had been only partly fulfilled. The introduction of primary health care had proved to be more expensive and complex than had originally been envisaged. If policy remained unchanged prospects for the 1990s were not bright. Developing countries must give higher priority to health care, especially primary health care. Since the resources available would continue to be insufficient, the effectiveness and efficiency of health care programmes must be improved. The donor community must support those programmes. In cooperation with the developing countries, they must reinforce self-help and participation through multilateral or bilateral programmes.

64. The Community and the signatory countries of the Lomé Convention had always endeavoured to devote a significant proportion of Community funds to improving educational and health facilities. The Community had been providing its partners with financial and technical assistance in the educational field since the establishment of the first European Development Fund. Within the framework of the Fourth Lomé Convention, which had come into force in 1991, human resources development was one of the chosen priorities. In all its integrated development programmes, the Community continued to give people a central place in development. Member States of the Community also provided substantial assistance through their bilateral programmes. Lastly, no substantial progress could be achieved in human development without the full participation of women in decision-making and economic and social progress. Together with education, health, nutrition and the acquisition of skills, popular participation was a fundamental aspect of any national development

(Mr. Rade, Netherlands)

plan, but it must be coupled with a democratic and accountable political system and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In short, while human resources development was an essential prerequisite for sustainable economic growth, it was not in itself sufficient. It must be pursued within the broader context of human development.

65. Referring to agenda item 82 on operational activities for development, he said that the second Human Development Report showed that sustainable development was possible, even in countries with a fairly low gross national product and low international transfers. The report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation on operational activities for development dealt mainly with the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which must be reviewed regularly. Resolution 44/211 charged the Director-General with various tasks, which he had indeed executed. However, the general tone of the report was too positive, as if further improvements were hardly necessary. The Twelve would have appreciated more precise and more concrete proposals on strengthening collaboration among the various United Nations agencies in the field. Indeed, the United Nations must decentralize its activities at that level and promote national execution. The report should have contained suggestions as to how to improve the system further. The section on programming did indeed point out substantive cooperation among United Nations organizations in that respect. However, while recognizing that some progress had been achieved, the Twelve believed that improvements should be sought, together with the recipient countries themselves, taking into account national programming frameworks and priorities. The same held true for the simplification and harmonization of procedures. The Twelve were not convinced by the argument that progress in the United Nations system depended on progress in a broader framework involving multilateral and bilateral donors. While it was certainly important to ensure better coordination within the donor community, that should not prevent the United Nations from properly coordinating activities within its own system, if only because that was the desire voiced by Member States. It was also important for recipient countries themselves to harmonize and simplify their own procedures as much as possible.

66. On the question of the integration of women in development, the Twelve joined the Director-General in acknowledging that the United Nations had played a catalytic role over the past 15 years, by creating global awareness of the issue, and by facilitating the integration of women in all aspects of the development process. However, there was no cause for complacency, for much remained to be done. Women's access to resources and their share of resources must still be increased. Referring to entrepreneurship, he said that, while considerable and valuable work had already been carried out by nearly every major organization in order to encourage the participation of the private sector in development, much remained to be done in that area as well.

67. The triennial review of operational activities would take place in 1992 in both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. It would be useful to give some guidance to the Director-General on the kind of

(Mr. Rade, Netherlands)

preparatory work to be done to that end. The Twelve suggested the following guidelines: (a) there was no need for a review of all aspects of operational activities of the system, since resolution 44/211 set forth the main policy directions: decentralization, coordination, national execution, strengthening at the local and field levels; (b) as resources were limited, the report of the Director-General for the triennial review should focus on a few important issues; (c) those issues might include: first, field representation of the United Nations, particularly the role of the resident coordinator, multidisciplinary teams and common premises; second, programming, including an integrated operational system-wide response taking into account the comparative advantage of the various programmes and organs of the United Nations, to integrated national programming frameworks; third, national execution, the provision of technical assistance and participation; fourth, the issue of training in the field and at headquarters; fifth, the issue of decentralization and accountability.

68. In conclusion, it was essential for the Committee to draft a resolution on operational activities during the current session, which would send a message about the determination of all delegations to implement resolution 44/211 fully, provide guidance for the work undertaken in certain areas where progress was felt to have fallen short of expectations, and contain clear guidelines on preparations for the triennial review of the operational activities of the United Nations system.

69. Ms. CUAYO (Philippines) thanked the Chairman for expressing the Committee's sympathy to the Philippine people, who had suffered greatly as a result of many natural disasters in recent days. The Philippines thanked the international community, the United Nations and its specialized agencies for the assistance provided and appealed for continued assistance in support of its national development efforts.

70. Within the context of the United Nations system, operational activities for development translated development philosophies into practical realities. Over the years, Member States had assigned to the United Nations responsibility for an increasing number of operational activities for development. However, resources were required in order to carry out those activities. The report of the Secretary-General on the question stressed that the Governments of developed market-economy countries were reviewing their development policies. There was reason to believe that the review would affect their positions in the United Nations specialized agencies and multilateral financial institutions.

71. It was reasonable for donors to hope that their contributions would be applied to areas they considered priorities and used as effectively as possible. In that regard, her delegation wished to raise a number of questions: whether the meaning of development philosophy at the grass-roots level had been sufficiently analysed; whether the existence of varied situations among the various recipients of development aid had been

(Ms. Cuayo, Philippines)

recognized; whether the attention currently devoted to "favourite themes" (the status of women, promotion of entrepreneurship, environment) was sufficient to respond to development requirements; and whether sufficient consideration had been given to ways and means of enhancing the productive capacity of people in their everyday lives.

72. In the light of the varied needs and experiences of regions and nations it was important, first of all, to understand how improvements had been made in the quality of life of the people to whom development resources were devoted. To that end, there were parameters for measuring how basic needs of populations had been met and the extent to which their productive capacity had been enhanced. That basic development objective must never be overlooked.

73. On the other hand, the Philippines, as a recipient country, fully recognized the responsibilities incumbent on it. The Philippine Government attached great importance to the principle of mutual responsibility. Execution modalities, which should facilitate the exercise of that responsibility included the following: programming or project approach, field representation and coordination, decentralization, harmonization, and simplification of procedures, and the training of local coordinators.

74. A feedback mechanism must also be established within the framework of the United Nations system. The mechanism should enable recipient Governments to express their views throughout programme or project implementation and indicate whether the programme or project in question was truly responsive to the needs of the target sectors or groups.

75. Her delegation hoped that, when the Committee drafted a resolution on the question, it would take all those aspects into account and place people at the centre of the development process.

76. Ms. SAAD (Egypt) said that a new approach seemed to be emerging with regard to the concept of development and to international cooperation which would have a bearing on the future role of the United Nations in the field of operational activities for development. It would therefore be appropriate at that stage to refer to the Charter of the United Nations, which had laid the bases for many international aspects, including development. The preamble mentioned recourse to international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. That was a goal to which the peoples of the United Nations had aspired; it fell within a comprehensive framework, and was based on international law. Article 55 also stated that, in the field of international economic cooperation, the United Nations would seek to find solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems. Those provisions indicated that the role of the United Nations in providing development assistance was enshrined in the Charter.

77. Unfortunately, there had been an increasing tendency in recent times to move away from such a commitment. Various initiatives had been pursued, which, if they materialized, could weaken the substantive role of the United

(Ms. Saad, Egypt)

Nations in the development sector and erode its intergovernmental nature and eventually lead to the disappearance of the very concept of assistance. They were intended to change the role of the Organization, to shift the focus of its activities from the development sector to the humanitarian sector, from the long-term process to one tailored to immediate needs. They measured success and effectiveness by purely market criteria rather than by the criteria of collective responsibility. The United Nations would thus cease to play a catalytic role in international cooperation.

78. General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) on the capacity of the United Nations development system, known as the 1970 consensus, contained a number of basic elements which were still topical: they included neutrality, universality, multilateralism, assistance in the form of grants, the role of the recipient Government (country programmes were based on national development plans and priorities); the role of the United Nations system; and, finally, the role of the resident coordinator; it would be noted that the latter derived their legitimacy from the very existence of organizations within the United Nations system and the need to coordinate their activities. The resident coordinator's mandate was determined by agreement with the recipient Government within the framework of a country programme.

79. Operational activities for development represented the most viable and tangible achievement of the United Nations system in the development field in that they benefited both donor and recipient.

80. She expressed the sincere hope that the United Nations would continue to afford impartial assistance to the developing countries, which were making desperate efforts to improve their peoples' standard of living.

81. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that his country hoped that UNDP would continue its efforts, under the effective direction of its Administrator, to meet the needs and priorities of the developing countries, particularly those of the least developed countries. The Programme's resources were, however, clearly insufficient in relation to the growing needs of those countries, and Governments must therefore increase their contributions.

82. Concerted international efforts in the field of international cooperation were taking place against a background of enormous and widespread poverty. It was therefore to be hoped that greater attention would be paid to the social and environmental aspects of development, particularly in the context of structural adjustment policies, which ought also to stimulate economic growth.

83. Referring to multinational assistance, he said that there should be greater complementarity between bilateral and multilateral aid projects. Furthermore, bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation projects should take greater account of the possibility of taking advantage of the ability and experience of the more advanced developing countries for the benefit of the other developing countries.

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

84. It was also to be hoped that the climate favouring innovation and experimentation to improve multilateral technical assistance to the developing countries would persist. An examination of UNDP-supported projects highlighted the substantial benefits that resulted from efforts at the global, interregional and regional levels.

85. The number of multilateral projects was increasing, a factor which might offer considerable advantages to the developing countries. Greater attention should be paid to identifying, formulating and implementing such projects, which could have a multiplier effect, thus enhancing the self-reliance of the developing countries. Greater focus should also be placed on the application of science and technology to development in those projects and efforts.

86. UNDP should play a primary role in the transfer of science and technology to the developing countries, and should concentrate on those sectors which could contribute directly to development. Science and technology could substantially improve the living conditions of the population in the developing countries; for that reason, a precise formulation of projects in that field might be extremely helpful.

87. Particular efforts should be made with regard to projects relating to agricultural development and agricultural extension, small-scale industries, arid- and semi-arid-zone development, community development and water and energy resources. Such projects could effectively contribute to lasting development and would have a direct impact on the economic progress of the developing countries. They also highlighted the importance of developing human resources. For its part, Israel had adopted an approach to rural development which was based essentially on the human factor, taking into account the fact that the development of human resources was the prerequisite of agricultural development.

88. As a developing country, Israel attached great importance to technical cooperation between developing countries. Such cooperation was one of the essential preconditions for improving the economic and social conditions of those countries. That was why, for over 30 years, his country had been participating in various activities in association with many developing countries in projects involving integrated farms, solar energy, literacy and cooperatives. Thousands of Israeli advisers and experts had been sent abroad to contribute to the development of agriculture, the strengthening of health and social services and other activities.

89. Multilateral assistance should continue to benefit from the necessary assistance from Governments, and particularly those of the industrialized countries. At the same time, the developing countries must be encouraged to reassess their use of multilateral funds, in order to increase contributions to their development.

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

90. His delegation was also concerned by the situation of the least developed countries, and supported the special measures on their behalf and the implementation of the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. In conclusion, his delegation reaffirmed that cooperation between nations, partnership for development and human solidarity, would ensure that the objectives of the Fourth United Nations Development Decade became a reality.

91. Mr. SAMUELSSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, recalled that they had manifested a long-standing interest in strengthening international cooperation, notably the United Nations system, including its operational activities for development.

92. The Nordic countries had recently put forward comprehensive reform proposals in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations in that field and make it more effective. They attached great importance to the comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development and the guidelines for the system that should emerge therefrom. General Assembly resolution 44/211 referred to a number of highly important issues in that regard. The resolution to be adopted at the current session should concentrate on those areas requiring further impetus, including decentralization, coordination and the role of the resident coordinator, programming, better utilization of the respective organs' comparative advantages, harmonization of rules, regulations and procedures, and execution by Governments or national agencies.

93. The end of the cold war offered new challenges to the world community. Many of the threats to human survival remained, however, and the enormous imbalance between North and South continued basically unchanged. Environmental degradation, the pressure of population growth and poverty-driven migration were but some of the issues that might become causes of new conflicts. The problems were global and must be dealt with globally. The United Nations, in facing those risks and opportunities, was confronted by new demands and expectations. While the Organization was now increasingly being used to settle political conflicts, it was making less headway in the social and economic development field. Strengthening the role of the United Nations in those fields was the real challenge of the 1990s. As major contributors to United Nations operational activities, the Nordic countries were very concerned about the efficiency and impact of those activities.

94. The Nordic project had been launched three years earlier as a contribution to the strengthening of United Nations activities in the development field. It had been motivated by a concern to maintain international solidarity so as to promote development in an increasingly interdependent world. The final report of the project, submitted in May 1991, had met with a very encouraging response.

(Mr. Samuelsson, Sweden)

95. The resources available to the United Nations system amounted to some $5 billion per annum; more than two thirds of that amount was allocated to operational activities for development. But the organizational structure had proliferated in an ad hoc manner in response to emerging needs, and in many ways reflected past problems rather than current realities.

96. The United Nations was involved in an ever-growing range of activities in the economic and social fields, for which new institutions had been created. But the roles and mandates of the various agencies, funds and programmes had been insufficiently defined. Fragmentation had increased, often encouraged by a diversity of contributions to the financing of United Nations activities. Coordination was more difficult than ever and the Organization's basic problem was to respond coherently and rapidly.

97. Partly as a consequence of the shortcomings of the United Nations system, the World Bank group and the regional development banks were now playing a much more prominent role with regard to technical assistance, largely because many donors seemed to be convinced that multilateral development banks were more competent in managing programmes and projects and were more responsive to members' concerns about programme direction and management accountability in particular. Whatever the reasons, there was a clear tendency towards marginalization of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. If the opportunities offered by international political developments were not grasped, that process would become accentuated. It was thus essential to reform the system, failing which its inefficiency would lead to a decrease in donor contributions which would in turn reinforce the process of marginalization. The system must achieve better results in order to break that vicious circle and make the Organization a more effective channel for the delivery of well-defined assistance programmes.

98. Improving the system of governance and designing a more appropriate funding system were the two most important issues to be considered in the forthcoming substantive discussion on reform of the operational activities of the United Nations system. There was insufficient coordination of the development programmes and funding activities of the United Nations and inadequate overview of the resources allocated for that purpose. Member States had difficulty in exercising effective guidance over the various activities. There was therefore a need for a high-level forum for Member States to discuss development issues in a coherent way. To that end the Nordic project had proposed the establishment of an international development council. The institutional arrangements were not spelled out in detail, but it was understood that no reform should lead to a more complicated system of governance. It was not excluded that the reformed Economic and Social Council might undertake that function.

99. There was also a need to create more effective governance of United Nations operational activities. The existing governing bodies did not always give the necessary support and guidance on a continuous basis. In that

(Mr. Samuelsson, Sweden)

connection the Nordic project was proposing the creation of a system of smaller governing bodies that should meet on a regular basis. The membership of those bodies should respect the principle of universality.

100. The basic question was how to match multilateral funding with international needs, notably in terms of predictability, stability and fair burden-sharing between nations. The Nordic countries felt that the current system of voluntary contributions was not satisfactory. A new approach must be adopted and the current funding system revised. In that connection the Nordic project introduced the idea that funding for operational activities for development could be broadened by combining contributions from three sources: assessed contributions from all Member States, negotiated pledges to cover the bulk of the costs, and possible additional voluntary contributions.

101. The most appropriate venue for an in-depth discussion of the various reforms to be introduced in the field of operational activities seemed to be the high-level meeting of the reformed Economic and Social Council scheduled for July 1992. The Nordic countries would introduce a procedural decision to that effect. In preparation for the substantive discussion they would ask the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the various reforms proposals recently introduced.

102. Reform of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system could be carried forward only on the basis of consensus. The Nordic countries, for their part, would work to that end through consultation. The overriding goal was clear: to shape a United Nations that could meet the development aspirations of the countries of the South.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
35th meeting
held on
Thursday, 7 November 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 82: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/46/3, 344, 501/Rev.1 and 520; A/C.2/46/7)

(a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (A/46/186 and Add.1, A/46/206-E/1991/93 and Add.1-4)

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AGENDA ITEM 88: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/46/336, 344, 461, 501/Rev.1, 520 and 579)

1. Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria) said that, over the years, interaction between the secretariats and governing bodies of United Nations agencies involved in operational activities for development had become increasingly complex, and his delegation was concerned that decisions were often taken without regard for their practical meaning or consequences, particularly their financial implications. Organizations were frequently left to interpret what their governing bodies might have meant, which was an indication of how Member States tended to abdicate their responsibility. For that reason, one of the priority issues in the ongoing debate about the reform of the United Nations system must be better and more effective governance by Member States.

2. The relative decline in the amount of official development assistance (ODA) available for the operational activities of the development agencies of the United Nations system, especially bilateral cooperation activities, did not necessarily reflect a lack of confidence in those agencies. There was a natural tendency for national administrations to take complete charge of ODA they distributed so that they could point to the success or failure of their own efforts and increase their bilateral weight vis-à-vis developing countries. There was little reason to hope that that attitude would undergo substantial change, since most donors had developed well-entrenched bureaucracies to administer their bilateral funds. Another reason why donors preferred bilateral ODA might lie in recipient countries' continued insistence that the themes and objectives of operational activities should in no way limit their prerogative to use United Nations assistance in accordance with their national priorities and objectives and local cultural and socio-economic

(Mr. Jankowitsch, Austria)

realities. If donors' ideas were not duly taken into account, it was not surprising that their enthusiasm for multilateral ODA was tepid.

3. The organizations of the United Nations system engaged in operational activities for development must strive to excel because only through excellence and the full use of their unique advantage of universality and impartiality could they maintain their share of available ODA. Any real or perceived inadequacy stemming from mismanagement or the slightest indication of corruption would destroy their reputation.

4. The relationship between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the central funding body for operational activities, and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system had recently been reassessed. During the current period of transition, a few traditional roles had changed, and some units had taken over responsibilities previously vested in other agencies. Experience would show whether such emerging competition would complement efforts, and thus stimulate quality, or end in counter-productive rivalry. The specialized agencies should not abandon operational activities altogether to concentrate on "normative functions" and the preparation of studies, since the raison d'être of those agencies was involvement in technical cooperation activities.

5. Flexibility would be necessary if the United Nations development system was to adapt to changing requirements and formulate new strategies to deal with them. His delegation welcomed the strengthening of the concept of national execution and strongly supported the further integration of non-governmental organizations in project execution. However, changes, even when necessary, should be administered with great care. In order to avoid confusion, new structures would have to evolve gradually, with due consultation among all parties involved. In response to existing demand, various agencies had become far more involved in technical cooperation work than had been originally foreseen. All corrective measures should be thoroughly examined in the light of the tripartite system, which had proved useful. The United Nations development system should strive to implement the principle of timely and system-wide decentralization to the field.

6. While his delegation supported the concept of enhanced national execution in project implementation, it advocated strict adherence to the principle of accountability in its application, particularly during the current trial stage. As a member of the UNDP Governing Council, Austria sought clear evidence that that principle actually led to the timely and efficient execution of projects and due presentation of audited accounts in practice. That question should be given special attention during the next triennial review of operational activities, scheduled for 1992.

7. Mr. ZHANG Guanghui (China) said that it was important not to lose sight of the basic principles that guided the operational activities of the United Nations system, namely: universality, multilateralism and neutrality and the voluntary and grant nature of such activities; flexibility in responding to

(Mr. Zhang Guanghui, China)

the needs of developing countries and respect for their development policies and priorities; recognition that the formulation of national development plans and the setting of priorities and targets were the exclusive responsibility of recipient Governments; the need to adapt national execution to the specific situations of recipient countries in order to build national capacities; the need to maintain the traditional tripartite partnership and make use of the technical advantages of the specialized agencies; and the acceptance that coordination of external aid was the responsibility of recipient Governments. His delegation hoped that the technical cooperation agencies and organizations of the United Nations system would adhere to those principles in carrying out their respective mandates.

8. It was highly regrettable that the Human Development Report 1991 referred to some issues that were beyond the mandate of UNDP and had no direct bearing on development. The Report had given rise to controversy among various parties and had diverted the international community's attention from the practical difficulties and problems faced by developing countries. As to the ideas discussed in the Report, his delegation wished to formulate a number of observations.

9. Human development required an adequate material foundation that had to be built up through economic development. However, most developing countries had rather weak economies and were scientifically and technologically backward. Their primary task was to develop their national economy and raise the standard of living, and in that way lay the necessary material foundation for human development.

10. The problem of defining the concept of "human development" was in itself very complicated, and his delegation objected to the inclusion of the "human freedom index" in the forthcoming edition of the Human Development Report. Any attempt to quantify human rights was unscientific and inconsistent with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant provisions of international human rights instruments. Peoples of all countries should have the right to choose their own path of development, including "human development" strategies. The smooth implementation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system should not be affected by ideological differences.

11. The concept of human migration, also discussed in the Report, must be quantified. Migration was most often caused by a lack of the minimum conditions for survival and unbalanced economic development resulting from foreign aggression, civil upheavals, severe natural disasters and environmental degradation. The problem of mass migrations should be tackled at its roots, and UNDP should seek, within the scope of its mandate, ways and means of solving the practical problems faced by migrants.

12. In principle, his delegation was not opposed to the reduction of military expenditure; however, in view of its complexity, that issue should be allocated to United Nations bodies other than UNDP for consideration.

(Mr. Zhang Guanghui, China)

13. Given that the Human Development Report 1991 had given rise to such widespread controversy, UNDP should consider carefully whether to prepare the 1992 edition.

14. Over the past two years, considerable progress had been made in reviewing the governance arrangements of the World Food Programme (WFP) by the United Nations, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP itself. The bodies concerned had conducted a full exchange of views which had resulted in the unanimous adoption of the draft revised General Regulations. His delegation was in favour of the draft revised General Regulations and believed that WFP should continue to be run jointly by the United Nations and FAO and that the Executive Director of WFP should continue to be appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of FAO. The Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes must be strengthened through the enlargement of its membership and the enhancement of its functioning. His delegation understood that the provision of article 15 of the draft revised General Regulations, which stated that WFP "may also provide humanitarian economic assistance at the request of the Secretary-General", was applicable only under extremely unusual circumstances and that its application would not infringe the sovereignty of recipient countries.

15. Mr. BARAC (Romania) said that the latest efforts to reform the operational activities for development of the United Nations system seemed to be in keeping with the provisions of paragraph 17 (a) of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which called for the United Nations system to base its activities on the national programme framework of the recipient Governments. In that regard, strengthening the role of resident coordinators was essential for ensuring better coordination of operational activities and harmonizing policies and programmes at the country level.

16. Further measures would have to be taken to maintain the momentum of reform. A number of valuable ideas and proposals had already been put forward both by the relevant agencies of the United Nations system and by various Member States. The Nordic United Nations project contained a wealth of ideas dealing with the three main problem areas: overall policy guidance, governance and funding. Ultimately, the reform process should enhance the comparative advantages of the operational activities of the United Nations system, and his delegation supported the recommendation of the recent joint meeting of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) that that topic should be discussed in detail at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council's regular session in 1992.

17. At its thirty-eighth session, the UNDP Governing Council had adopted a number of landmark decisions on many issues of major importance for the entire system of technical cooperation. UNDP had been the main catalyst for involving the private sector in national development efforts, and his delegation welcomed the establishment of the Division for the Private Sector

(Mr. Barac, Romania)

in Development within the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation. The Division had conducted a fact-finding mission in Eastern Europe, including Romania, to determine how UNDP could participate in the economic reform process to help develop a privatization strategy for the region. UNDP private-sector activities should be expanded to include the compilation and dissemination of regulations and policies that promoted entrepreneurship and private-sector development; formulation and dissemination of methodologies for privatization of State-owned enterprises; organization of study tours in developed countries for entrepreneurs from countries in transition; development of an international network for privatization; appointment of special advisers for private-sector activities in the offices of UNDP resident representatives in interested countries; and provision of technical assistance to interested countries in order to promote entrepreneurship and the development of the private sector. In addition, UNDP and interested countries should prepare special management training projects for promoting entrepreneurship and the development of the private sector.

18. UNDP had also made a positive contribution to the transformation of Eastern European countries and their integration into the world economy. Governing Council decision 91/24 was only a first step, however, and his delegation looked forward to the formulation and presentation, at the Council's thirty-ninth session, of the of country and intercountry programmes which reflected that decision. While the UNDP regional programme for Europe made a valuable contribution in such fields as environment, energy, management and training and education, much more work should be done in the areas of problem identification, resource mobilization, project formulation and efficient coordination of regional efforts.

19. The informal exchange of views on the economic, social and environmental consequences of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait at the second regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council had revealed the extent of the losses suffered by the economies of countries, including Romania, that were bound by strong commercial ties to the Gulf region. The participants in the debate had concluded that international assistance to help countries severely affected by the conflict had not been provided through traditional channels and had frequently been inadequate. His delegation therefore welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Development Programme Task Force and hoped that the UNDP Administrator would submit a programme containing concrete proposals for assistance to the affected countries before the end of 1991.

20. Together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank, UNDP was in the forefront of activities to protect and improve the environment. Romania was firmly convinced that operational activities must meet environmental protection standards fully and was particularly interested in the speedy implementation of the project concerning environmental management in the Danube River basin. UNDP could also play a key role in implementing a subregional project on environmental management and sustainable development based at Chişinău, the capital of the Republic of Moldavia.

21. Mr. METE (Albania) said that Albania was seeking to create as many opportunities as possible for cooperation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system within the framework of operational activities for development. The assistance of UNDP and other specialized agencies would be especially important to Albania, which was on the verge of economic, social and political chaos. Two decades of development under an excessively centralized economic system had left the country without the essential infrastructure, as well as management know-how and the legal framework required for a market economy. The willingness of UNDP to help Albania with its transition had been appreciated, as had been the assistance provided by the United Nations system in dealing with the problem of Albanian refugees. Further assistance was now needed to help develop Albania's scientific institutions, universities and the productive sector. Participation in regional projects had already helped to increase the level of technical knowledge, and the UNDP office which had been opened in Tirana had rendered valuable assistance in that regard. The Albanian Government and people must also play their part by making full use of their own resources and capacities.

22. National capacities must be properly utilized in the formulation and execution of operational activities for development, taking due account of each country's level of development and circumstances, with resident coordinators playing a major role. It was important to preserve and strengthen the central role of UNDP in the funding of technical cooperation; the Programme also had a positive role to play in assisting countries that were embarking on the path towards a pluralist political system and a market economy in such areas as privatization, the training of managers and specialists, environmental protection, transfer of technology and telecommunications.

23. Experience had shown the continuing relevance of the fundamental principles underlying the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, namely universality, their voluntary nature, neutrality and multilateralism. It had also demonstrated the importance of respect for the principle of national Governments' responsibility for formulating and implementing national development programmes.

24. Mr. CARMICHAEL (Canada) said that in order to improve the effectiveness of operational activities for development, a medium- to long-term approach to questions of structure and mandate was required. Equally important, however, were the short-term functional initiatives referred to in General Assembly resolution 44/211. His delegation was disappointed at the slow progress made in the implementation of that resolution as a result of problems inherent in the structure of the operational activities system, such as a lack of clear system leadership, parochial agency agendas and conflicting governance systems.

25. Nevertheless the essentially mechanical improvements outlined in resolution 44/211 must be implemented within the context of the existing structure at once. Failure to do so would impose heavy costs on the developing countries the system had been designed to help. Opportunities

(Mr. Carmichael, Canada)

would be lost for development; moreover, the problems inherent in dealing with a system characterized by multiple procedures and cycles, scattered offices and facilities and uncoordinated programme objectives undermined the Organization's credibility. If developing countries were to be helped through development cooperation, the United Nations system should be concentrating on capacity-building in order to make national execution the norm, not the exception.

26. Given the complexity of resolution 44/211, time and resources must be concentrated on five key elements: the rationalization and integration of field office facilities; the harmonization of cycles and procedures within the United Nations system and, in due course, with recipient Governments; a common country statement of objectives derived from national priorities, leading to fully integrated programming; national execution; and a United Nations programme approach targeted on the building of national capacity to accelerate human development. The effectiveness of human resource development activities in particular could be significantly improved by better coordination of United Nations operational activities, and the focus of the system's development programmes should be on human and institutional capacity-building, with particular emphasis on women. The Human Development Report 1991 also provided useful guidance in that regard.

27. By the time of the triennial review in 1992, each United Nations country office should have in place: a specific plan for achieving common premises by 1995, where economically feasible; a set of harmonized rules and procedures for all United Nations development agencies, with a plan for their integration with recipient Government cycles by 1995; a common, focused country statement of objectives fully integrated with national objectives which reflected the comparative advantages of the United Nations system; a specific plan to promote national execution over a time-scale commensurate with national capacities; and a methodology for the implementation, by 1995, of an overall programme approach for the United Nations development system at the country level. Primary responsibility for the implementation of those measures should fall to the resident coordinators and, at the system level, to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation.

28. Decisive action and cooperation by all parts of the United Nations development system was crucial. UNDP must play a key role in the process and recipient Governments must be significantly involved. In view of the limited personnel resources available to carry out that task, the necessary staff should be seconded from other parts of the system to the Office of the Director-General.

29. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union, said that the scarcity of financial resources and the absence of sex-disaggregated statistics had limited progress towards the mainstreaming of women in development. Women throughout the world continued to suffer acute socio-economic hardships, and until they were able to

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

participate in political life and decision-making, their economic situation was unlikely to improve. Although the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation had put forward some extremely useful proposals on the subject, without a clearly stated and honoured commitment on the part of all countries there could be no concrete progress towards the advancement of women in the short and medium terms.

30. While political changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had encouraged a rethinking of the roles of the public and private sectors in development, the absence of a United Nations system-wide strategy for enhancing the role of entrepreneurship in economic development and reliable information about the volume, scope and type of activities undertaken by individual agencies made it difficult to assess the progress that had been achieved and the tasks that remained. In that respect, the Director-General's proposals in paragraph 44 of his report (A/46/206, annex) were quite appropriate.

31. While seeking to ensure that the transition of the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe to a market economy was achieved without social instability and upheaval, the United Nations system should avoid redirecting financial resources away from the developing countries, as had occurred in the case of food aid. The collapse of the collectivist system had lengthened the list of unresolved problems faced by the developing countries, the most notable of which were population growth, poverty and hunger, increased flows of refugees and displaced persons, the spread of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and environmental degradation.

32. In General Assembly resolutions S-18/3 and 45/199 the international community had indicated its awareness of the need to prevent the difficult problems posed for the development of the South by insufficient financial resources for investment from worsening and the need to take account of ecological imperatives while safeguarding natural resources. However, donor countries had not yet come up with the financial resources needed to achieve the objectives set out in those resolutions. The nominal value of resources allocated to operational activities had in fact decreased. Morocco supported the Director-General's call for substantial concessional resources to enable the developing countries to revive and sustain their economic growth and for the developed countries to meet the agreed international target for ODA as well as the targets established at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

33. While it was not yet possible to assess all the progress that had been made by the United Nations system in implementing General Assembly resolution 44/211, important decisions had been taken by the UNDP Governing Council at its thirty-eighth session, particularly with regard to successor arrangements for agency support costs, national execution and human development. Those decisions could not fail to have a positive impact on the tripartite relationship, since they encouraged execution by national agencies.

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

34. His delegation supported the proposal to explore the feasibility of a United Nations system-wide strategy to upgrade and develop the skills and knowledge of United Nations system officials and national officials and was pleased to learn that certain donors were prepared to participate in the financing of such a strategy, provided that its main objective was to develop the human resources of the developing countries. He also welcomed the study to be undertaken by WFP on ways of integrating food aid with other development resources. The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should assess the real impact of all those measures prior to the triennial review in 1992.

35. Other positive developments were the increase in the number of short-term consultants and nationally recruited staff, the limited number of closures and the modest but sustained increase in the number of field offices and the expansion of the range of their functions. It shoujld be noted, however, that budgetary constraints and the principle of zero growth were compromising the field offices' effectiveness. Progress in the simplification and harmonization of procedures governing programming processes and project cycles had been limited, given that operational activities constituted only approximately 10 per cent of the total aid flow to developing countries. Consequently, the problems associated with the diversity of procedures could be adequately resolved only with the help of the major bilateral and multilateral donors. Problems associated with the interpretation of such concepts as the programme approach and integrated programming should also be resolved, either by establishing universally acceptable definitions or by allowing beneficiary countries to draw their own defintions.

36. It would be easier to assess the situation and the relevance of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211 once the Director-General's reports for the comprehensive triennial policy review were issued. The Director-General's Office should be provided with the necessary human and financial resources to enable it to produce reports of the necessary quality together with recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of operational activities.

37. The countries of the Arab Maghreb Union remained committed to the principle of neutrality which characterized the technical assistance provided by the United Nations system. Attempts to introduce political conditions into operational activities were virtually tantamount to a violation of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

38. Ms. CAPELING-ALAJIKA (United Nations Development Fund for Women) said that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had worked for 15 years to mobilize resources for women's economic activities and draw attention to the enormous contributions made by women to society. UNIFEM had been obliged to develop focused strategies to ensure the effective use of its limited resources for the empowerment of women. The Fund's long-term strategy concentrated on two sectors of crucial importance to women in developing

(Ms. Capeling-Alajika)

countries, agriculture and trade and industry, with particular emphasis on food security, environment, micro-enterprise and employment, and sought to support activities that addressed the major constraints faced by women.

39. Women formed a significant percentage of the agricultural labour force and were a major resource in food production, distribution, processing and preparation. Strategies for improving national and household food security needed to address the fact that, in addition to time spent in agricultural production, women had to spend time caring for children and performing other domestic duties. Such strategies must therefore address issues such as child-care arrangements, the introduction of time- and labour-saving technologies and access to credit, training and advances in agricultural science and technology. They should also build on the knowledge acquired by women in such areas as seed selection, pest management, soil maintenance and animal production.

40. Biases inherent in current approaches to agrarian and rural development had led to an inadequate analysis of women's role in food production and thus to a wasteful neglect of the knowledge, skills and needs of female farmers. Existing methods of choosing and introducing technological improvements in agriculture had increased women's work burden while undermining their rights to the product of their labour, thus promoting their marginalization and affecting the health and welfare of their families. UNIFEM programmes were focused on increasing women's access to credit, to safe and appropriate technologies and to training to equip them with the skills, knowledge, experience and confidence for increased self-reliance. At the macro-policy level, the Fund's long-term strategy sought to provide support for national planning activities and national machineries for the advancement of women with a view to strengthening women's voice in national development decision-making, thereby creating an environment in which direct support for women's grass-roots activities could flourish.

41. Experience had shown that it was important to take social, environmental and human factors into account along with economic objectives. A flexible approach to project design had shown that, with knowledge of the specific living conditions of the poor, projects could meet basic human needs and foster an awareness of ecological sustainability. The creative response of women's groups involved in a Peruvian project to support non-governmental organizations developing and introducing food-processing technologies had led to substantial savings in the time spent on domestic duties; at the same time, the dissemination of those technologies would generate employment and income for women and improve nutrition for rural families.

42. UNIFEM's work in Africa involved strengthening relationships with major development agencies, building strong working partnerships with regional institutions of science, technology and development management and improving women's capacity at the community level to manage their own development. A key element in the Fund's strategy was providing support to intermediary

(Ms. Capeling-Alajika)

organizations that offered rural women alternative access routes to the priority sectors of UNIFEM activities.

43. UNIFEM also sought to draw attention to the needs of women refugees and their children and to influence mainstream refugee programmes by giving direct support to demonstration projects which empowered women and contributed to their economic welfare, and by reminding policy makers of the vital role played by women in emergencies in rebuilding families, communities and societies.

44. Mr. WALKER (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that human resources development had been severely damaged by the decline in social expenditure occasioned by structural adjustment. The challenge of the 1990s would be to translate the new perception of people-centred development into practical activities at the national and regional levels. The Caribbean Community welcomed the priority accorded to human resources development in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and the work done in that area by the World Bank and UNDP, among others.

45. The economic problems of the 1980s had had particularly disastrous consequences in the Caribbean region. The Grand Anse Declaration, adopted by the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in July 1989, contained a resolution recognizing that human resources must play a central role in regional and national development strategies. In their human resources programmes, which fostered, inter alia, indigenous entrepreneurship and the expansion of the knowledge base, Caribbean countries sought to design structural adjustment programmes with minimal negative social impact.

46. Human resources development would be best pursued from a cross-sectoral approach stressing the integration of women in development and the enhancement of national capacities. Education and training were of primary importance. In particular, educational opportunities at the secondary and higher levels must be increased. Training programmes should equip students with marketable skills based on job demand. Distance-teaching programmes at the tertiary level of education, which had proved valuable in the Caribbean region, might be explored more actively by other developing countries and, at the same time, provide a major input to cooperation among developing countries.

47. Science and technology must also be a major component of education and training in order to ensure that the transfer of technology to developing countries was meaningful. At the same time, the particular economic and social requirements of the developing world should be reflected in an appropriate mix of traditional, locally generated and imported technology. Resources must be mobilized to enhance the coordination of United Nations activities in support of national human development initiatives, and the CARICOM States hoped that the new demands on available resources would not detract from the high priority the international community had accorded to human resources development.

48. Mr. KHORRAMI (Afghanistan) said that while the developing countries themselves had a decisive role to play in eradicating poverty, hunger and disease, raising living standards and achieving socio-economic development, assistance from developed countries and international organizations was also an important factor. The operational activities of the United Nations system contributed significantly in that regard and therefore required substantial support from the international community. Projects funded by the United Nations should be carried out in an integrated manner in order to strengthen the national capacities of developing countries, which should eventually assume full responsibility for project execution.

49. Afghanistan fully supported the recommendations of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation contained in document A/46/206 and looked forward to the adoption and successful implementation of the draft resolution on operational activities. The operational activities of the United Nations system should reflect the overall strategies, policies and priorities formulated in the new International Development Strategy and should contribute effectively to its implementation. To that end the overall level of resources should be increased and a greater percentage of ODA allocated to operational activities, particularly in countries which did not receive sufficient assistance from international financial institutions or through the bilateral channels currently preferred by donors.

50. Afghanistan had received economic and technical assistance from a number of United Nations organizations, and operational activities in the country were harmonized with the national social and economic development plan. The United Nations humanitarian and economic assistance programmes for Afghanistan were also rendering valuable assistance. He appealed to donor countries which had pledged their support for that programme to make every effort to assist Afghanistan in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of its economy.

51. Mr. KOIKE (Japan), speaking on agenda item 82, said that the fundamental political changes in the world were creating positive conditions for economic development and heightening awareness of the need for a market-oriented system, popular participation, pluralistic democracy and respect for human rights. While the United Nations had concluded important agreements on development strategy and channelled important resources to its operational activities, current needs still exceeded available resources. The key to the success of those activities was more efficient utilization of all resources.

52. In 1990, Japan had contributed $700 million to the United Nations system, and its Government and people wanted to see that their money was being utilized effectively to meet the real needs of developing countries. His delegation believed that attainment of the central policy objectives set out in General Assembly resolution 44/211 would considerably improve the system's efficiency. Progress had been made since the adoption of that resolution, and UNDP Governing Council decision 91/32 on successor arrangements for agency support costs would encourage the United Nations system to shift from the project execution towards the provision of more substantive and improved technical support.

(Mr. Koike, Japan)

53. Tangible results of the efforts to improve efficiency were still limited, however. The Director-General must therefore provide comprehensive information, analysis and proposals on the major topics for consideration during the 1992 triennial policy review of operational activities, so that new policy guidelines could be formulated. Member States should help conserve the scarce resources available for the review by indicating the priority subjects on which the Director-General should concentrate. Decentralization, field representation, including the resident coordinator system, an integrated approach to the United Nations system and national execution all merited priority consideration.

54. Japan welcomed the guidelines elaborated to strengthen the resident coordinator system and other important measures taken to that end. However, the practical effect of those steps was still unknown, and much remained to be done to give real substance to the resident coordinator's roles and responsibilities. Under the recently adopted successor arrangements for agency support costs, the new authority of resident coordinators and resident representatives to allocate funds for technical support services at the programme level would strengthen their leadership role at the programme formulation stage. The new support cost arrangement was of particular importance, since effective coordination was best fostered at the very outset of the programming process.

55. Little progress had been achieved in promoting decentralization or delegation of authority. The situation should therefore be carefully monitored and appropriate guidance sought from the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. While progress had also been scant in the development of an integrated United Nations system response, Japan welcomed the Director-General's initiative of issuing resident coordinators a set of draft guidelines for enhancing the programming process as well as the ongoing analysis of experience acquired at the country level in programming and joint implementation activities. The in-depth deliberations which those studies would make possible could lead to consensus at the current session and provide guidance for further steps.

56. There was growing awareness of a need to reform the organizations of the United Nations system that were involved in operational activities. In that context, his delegation fully shared the concerns expressed in the context of the Nordic United Nations project about the organizational shortcomings of the system and the Organization's gradual marginalization in comparison with the World Bank and the regional development banks. That issue required further study by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in 1992.

57. Turning to agenda item 88, he noted the recent trend, largely supported by the UNDP Human Development Report, to include human resource development in the larger concept of human development, which placed human beings at the centre of development. Recalling the controversy aroused by the Human Development Report 1991, he suggested that the reports should concentrate on

(Mr. Koike, Japan)

the areas in which UNDP had competence, while human rights issues might be more appropriately dealt with by other bodies, such as the Centre for Human Rights.

58. The United Nations had an important role to play in strengthening the international community's assistance for human development. An interdisciplinary effort by the entire system, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, was required, involving coordination at both the policy-making and field levels as well as between the United Nations system and recipient Governments and among donor countries. Japan believed that human development presented a test case which would reveal the capacity of the United Nations system to act as a coherent entity and initiator of dialogue, especially with the developing countries.

59. Mr. SIEBER (Observer for Switzerland) expressed the hope that a resolution on operational activities would be adopted by consensus at the current session. Acknowledging the valuable progress report of the Director General for Development and International Economic Cooperation and the constructive deliberations of the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council, he said that additional efforts were required to upgrade the operational activities of the United Nations system. Integrated programming of United Nations field activities, for example, must be improved. In that regard, his delegation would appreciate further details on implementation and follow-up of the measures proposed by the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ(OPS)) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).

60. Coordination and management would be much more effective if recipient countries defined their objectives clearly. The United Nations system could help recipient countries to plan and coordinate by taking into account not only its own specialized agencies but also JCGP meetings and the activities of other multilateral and bilateral donors. Training and institutional support, decentralization of authority and greater budgetary flexibility and accountability would also strengthen the coordination and management of operational activities.

61. A progress report on efforts to simplify and harmonize rules and procedures would also be extremely helpful. As indicated in document A/46/206, the United Nations system should review its procedures, taking into account the requirements of recipient countries and the need for accountability. Another area which should be reviewed was the UNDP field network and the role of the resident coordinator which should be strengthened. In that connection, the informal exchange of views which had taken place in September between five resident representatives and the UNDP Governing Council had been significant.

62. His delegation looked forward to the report by the Director-General on the implementation of the useful guidelines elaborated within the framework of

(Mr. Sieber, Observer, Switzerland)

ACC and took note of the encouraging interim assessment and report on the first series of training courses offered to senior United Nations representatives by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at Turin. Such courses should be made a permanent feature of a more comprehensive strategy for training in operational activities and technical development.

63. It was to be hoped that the 1992 comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities would be realistic and would focus on practical concerns. While General Assembly resolution 44/211 must serve as the basis for the review, it was also essential to consider the proposals contained in certain recent studies, such as the Nordic United Nations project and the studies conducted by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), together with the proposals put forward by the representative of Canada. Given the budgetary problems faced by many traditional donor countries and growing competition for resources, the United Nations system must project a sharper image in order to attract additional resources. The comprehensive triennial policy review might provide a timely occasion to consider the Organization's operational activities from that broader perspective.

64. Mr. KOULYK (Ukraine) said that the operational activities of the United Nations system for development were a vital component in the economic and social development of developing countries. Referring to the comprehensive statistical data on operational activities and development contained in document A/46/206/Add.1, he noted with approval that over four fifths of all concessional resources in 1989 had been allocated to Africa and the Asian and Pacific region. Ukraine welcomed the efforts of UNDP to adapt to the changing pattern of economic coordination in the world. While adhering to the priorities set out in the consensus of 1970, UNDP and the related funds of the United Nations system should focus their efforts on the radical economic reforms under way in many countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, the world's severe environmental problems, and the need to achieve stability and transparency in all sectors of the world economy.

65. The report of the thirty-eighth session of the UNDP Governing Council (E/1991/34) demonstrated that UNDP activities generally reflected the changes in international economic cooperation, as evidenced in particular by the preparations for the fifth programming cycle (1992-1996). Ukraine attached particular importance to the inclusion of economies in transition among the criteria for the provision of UNDP assistance, since such assistance would help integrate those countries in the world economic system, to the benefit of all countries, including those of the developing world. Ukraine had given priority in its economic policy to a swift conversion to the market system and a more active participation in the international division of labour. That policy had been given particular impetus by Ukraine's recent declaration of independence, and his country was prepared to hold discussions with the Administrator of UNDP to determine modalities for the Organization's direct participation in Ukraine's radical economic reform.

(Mr. Koulyk, Ukraine)

66. His delegation also noted with approval the attention given by UNDP to environmental problems, particularly in view of their universal nature and the current preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. For Ukraine, those problems were closely interlinked with the question of international cooperation on the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and he therefore welcomed UNDP Governing Council decision 91/23 on that subject.

67. Following the recent fires at the Chernobyl power plant, the Ukrainian parliament had adopted a decision to complete the shut-down of the station in 1995 and had requested technological and material assistance from the United Nations, necessitated by the massive technical complications and the universal lack of experience in the shutting down of nuclear power stations and the disposal of spent fuel, as well as by the country's current economic problems. The Supreme Soviet of Ukraine had expressed the hope that all countries, and primarily the nuclear Powers, would support that effort, and his delegation believed that the implementation of Governing Council decision 91/23 would be substantially advanced by the participation of UNDP.

68. Mr. HADDAD (World Bank) stressed the role of human capital and human resources development in economic growth and technological progress. The World Bank had made poverty reduction a central element of its operations and policy. Based on the World Development Report 1990, it had adopted a two-part strategy for poverty reduction: promoting broad-based economic growth to generate income-earning opportunities for the poor and ensuring access of the poor to basic social services. The World Development Report 1991 had stressed the importance of secondary education, science and technology training and international exchanges of engineers in support of technology transfers.

69. Despite substantial progress in human development over the past three decades, there remained a huge gap between the demands and expectations of developing countries on the one hand and reality on the other. Closing that gap would require long-term commitments at the country level and difficult choices on four fronts: gearing human resource development investment to macroeconomic policy, demographic change and infrastructure projects; balancing competing demands among sectors and different human resource development investments; apportioning tasks between the State and the private sector (including non-governmental organizations); and determining the institutional skills and capacities to be developed.

70. The international development assistance community also had a key role to play in closing that gap. As available resources were limited, it must target and programme assistance selectively by providing support for human resource development over a sufficient length of time; increasing financial support for human resources; facilitating the transfer of ideas; and promoting international coordination and cooperation. Further details of that four-pronged approach were available to all delegations.

(Mr. Haddad, World Bank)

71. Reflecting its commitment to human-centred development, a commitment that would continue well into the 1990s, the World Bank had vastly increased its human resources development lending in the past five years. As of fiscal 1991, the Bank's cumulative lending in the field of education amounted to approximately $13.5 billion, while lending for population, health and nutrition had amounted to $5 billion. World Bank lending for education accounted for 14 per cent of external assistance from all sources and 45 per cent of multilateral financing in 1989; lending for population, health and nutrition had accounted for 7 per cent of all external assistance and 11 per cent of multilateral financing. That significant expansion in lending demonstrated that countries were no longer reluctant to seek Bank assistance for human development. Recently, the Bank had also diversified into new areas, such as social action funds, broader social safety-net initiatives, and science and technology.

72. Mr. OKSAMITNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that promotion of the welfare of every individual was an essential concern which should determine the priorities for joint action to enhance the efficiency of the operational activities of the United Nations system. The Soviet Union therefore welcomed the increasing trend of the projects of many programmes and funds, particularly UNDP and UNICEF, to reflect a sense of global responsibility and awareness. At the same time, his delegation noted with concern the lack of coordination in United Nations activities, particularly where major humanitarian and emergency assistance operations were concerned. Other shortcomings included a failure to optimize the functions and structure of separate subdivisions and the unacceptably large expenditure on administrative and managerial needs. Those problems must be addressed on an ideology-free and non-discriminatory basis and in a manner consistent with the letter and spirit of the relevant major resolutions. The Soviet Union was willing to help strengthen United Nations operational activities in any way it could.

73. The Soviet Union was currently exploring modalities for the economic integration of the sovereign republics and ways of overcoming the severe structural and operational problems associated with that process. Severed economic links had to be restored as swiftly as possible in a new economic system based on truly democratic, market principles. Those difficult transformations were causing severe social and economic problems which were bound to have a far-reaching effect on world development. The Soviet Union looked forward to an appropriate response from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and other bodies of the system, particularly in protecting the interests of children during the transition period, establishing the necessary conditions for free competition, furthering the privatization of State property and the demonopolization of production, improving the system of management, promoting the development of small enterprises and stepping up measures to deal with the Chernobyl problem.

(Mr. Oksamitny, USSR)

74. Despite its own current problems, the Soviet Union hoped to play a more active role in multilateral programmes under UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, and therefore welcomed the impetus given by recent UNDP agreements to such issues as environmental conservation and restoration, combating AIDS, the development of human resources and assistance to the least developed countries. His delegation believed that UNDP might also address the conversion of military production. He welcomed the increased attention given by UNDP to the human factor in growth and development processes and hoped that that factor would be accorded similar priority in the economic work of the Organization as a whole.

75. The USSR welcomed efforts to enhance coordination of the UNDP and UNFPA programming cycles and to ensure that UNFPA programmes were better tailored to the social and economic needs of individual countries. His country was currently exploring ways of expanding its cooperation with UNFPA, in particular by extending the range of services it provided to assist the Fund's projects.

76. Applauding increased efforts by UNICEF to resolve global problems affecting mothers and children, he stressed that those problems could only be solved in the context of universal efforts to overcome underdevelopment and poverty, to implement complex and painful reforms, to preserve the environment and to make drastic cuts in military expenditure in all countries, including those of the developing world. The Soviet Union welcomed UNICEF's work on behalf of children's rights and had taken measures to fulfil its own commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In conclusion, he hoped that the Committee would be able to adopt responsible and balanced resolutions which properly reflected the increasingly universal approach of the United Nations to the world's economic and social problems.

77. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) lamented the loss of interest in many quarters in international economic cooperation. It was also unfortunate that the role of the United Nations in cooperation activities had been diminishing in recent years in favour of bilateral cooperation. That phenomenon was only partly attributable to the direction in which the system had evolved. In fact, the reasons for the shift were largely political. Donor countries preferred bilateral donations, over which they could maintain greater control.

78. In order for the United Nations to regain prominence in operational activities, defects in the current system must be corrected. In that regard, the proposals contained in the in-depth study prepared by the Nordic countries deserved support. It was his delegation's hope that the Nordic United Nations Project would be taken up at the 1992 session of the Economic and Social Council.

79. Nevertheless, operational activities which, however underfunded, focused on major development issues had always been crucial for developing countries.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

Operational activities had become even more relevant with the recent emphasis on national execution of projects and on key themes such as extreme poverty, the environment and technical cooperation among developing countries. However, the proliferation of executing agencies and organizations had blunted the decision-making and implementing capacities of the United Nations system and needlessly pushed up operational costs. Indeed, the World Bank and the regional development banks, which had entered the scene only recently and had greater resources, were occasionally more effective than the United Nations.

80. The comparative advantage of the United Nations system over other organizations was its neutrality, its universal access and its broader membership. In the future, however, the efficiency and management capabilities of United Nations operational activities must be enhanced. In that regard, his delegation supported a streamlining of functions with the establishment of a simple deliberative body and more effective governing bodies. The role of the specialized agencies must also be redefined. In no case, however, should reforms serve as a pretext for conditionality.

81. Chile attached great importance to technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). Through its own international cooperation agency, it had sought to give fresh impetus to that modality through cooperation agreements and projects with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. United Nations support and activity had been invaluable in that connection. His delegation hoped that increased human and financial resources would be provided to the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. The experience of the Latin American countries in coordinating their TCDC activities through the Latin American Economic System (SELA) could serve as a useful model in that regard.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.